

THE JACOBS REPORT

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For Immediate Release
May 27, 2005

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DEM EFFORT PROTECTS CONSUMER FINANCIAL INFORMATION

JACOBS: “No one should control your personal financial information but you.”

A coalition of legislative Democrats led by Sen. Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods), Sen. Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit), and Rep. Gino Polidori (D-Dearborn) announced the introduction of legislation that will require financial institutions to obtain a signature from consumers in order to sell or otherwise distribute personal information to other businesses, organizations or entities. The five-bill package will apply to banks, credit unions, and savings and loan institutions. The legislation is intended to protect consumers from unsolicited mailings and materials. It will also further protect consumers from identity theft and fraud.

Sponsors of the Senate legislation also include Sen. Virg Bernero (D-Lansing), Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton), and Sen. Mike Prusi (D-Ishpeming).

The introduction coincided with a similar five-bill package introduced in the House. House versions are sponsored by Representatives Andy Meisner, Gino Polidori, John Espinoza and Alma Smith.

The legislation is part of a statewide legislative consumer protection effort to protect consumer information, including medical records and credit information, and to ensure that consumer privacy is protected and preserved.

NEW CHILDREN’S OMBUDSMAN: MICHAEL HARMON

Governor Granholm Names Acting Replacement for Martinez

With the resignation of Michigan’s Children’s Ombudsman Lynne Martinez, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm announced the interim appointment of Michael Harmon as Acting Michigan’s Children’s Ombudsman.

“Lynne has made it her life’s mission to protect and care for children, and she has served Michigan’s children well in her role as Children’s Ombudsman,” Granholm said.

Martinez stepped down to run for mayor of Lansing.

Harmon, of Grand Ledge, currently serves as a supervising investigator in the Office of Children’s Ombudsman. He has served as Acting Children’s Ombudsman on three previous occasions.

Governor Granholm is expected to appoint a permanent Children's Ombudsman in the very near future.

The Office of Children's Ombudsman is an independent government agency that works to assure the safety and welfare of Michigan children who are in need of foster care, adoption, and protective services. The office independently investigates complaints, advocates for children, and recommends changes to improve law, policy, and practice that benefit children's welfare.

WRAPPING UP "EMERALD ASH BORER AWARENESS WEEK"

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm proclaimed the week of May 22 through May 28, 2005, as "Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Awareness Week" throughout Michigan to raise public awareness about EAB and the collective effort underway to prevent its spread.

"As we begin the traveling and tourism season, it is a perfect time to highlight ways we can work together to preserve and protect our treasured resources for future generations," Granholm said. "The most important role every citizen can play in this battle against emerald ash borer is to not move firewood as they head to their favorite vacation destination."

The proclamation highlights the importance of the continued cooperation and support of citizens, tourists, communities, government and industry partners necessary for containing the pest and protecting the millions of ash trees blanketing North America. During the week and throughout the year, Michigan residents and visitors should learn about EAB and adhere to the state's quarantine banning the transport of ash trees, ash materials and all firewood from quarantined areas. The Governor urges residents to be on the lookout for and immediately report possible signs of infestation through the toll-free EAB hotline (866-325-0023).

"Since its discovery in 2002, Emerald Ash Borer has caused significant economic and environmental damage to Michigan's natural resources," EAB Policy Director Patricia Lockwood. "Each state affected by EAB must work together and take aggressive action in order to safeguard the nation's forests and natural heritage. To be successful, this has to be a collective effort involving the cooperation of every citizen."

The Emerald Ash Borer Response Project, comprised of state and federal agencies, universities, and industry partners, attributes many of the "outlier" infestations (isolated pockets of infestation) to the movement of infested firewood.

Throughout EAB Awareness Week, several outreach and education efforts are planned to increase awareness of EAB throughout the tri-state region. In Michigan, these activities include:

Firewood checkpoints at key rest areas. Firewood will be inspected and EAB educational materials will be distributed. Any non-coniferous (hardwood) firewood coming from a quarantined area or showing signs of infestation will be confiscated and properly destroyed. Partnership with the Michigan State Police and its annual Operation Care forces at 30 rest stops across the state. Travelers will be offered coffee in cups printed with information about EAB and the importance of not moving firewood.

Billboards along key travel corridors leaving quarantined areas and heading north.
Radio public service announcements airing on numerous stations across the state.
Firewood/EAB alerts published in outdoor publications and posted in state and private parks, forest campgrounds, rest stops and welcome centers.

Emerald Ash Borer is an exotic insect native to Asia that attacks ash trees. In its larval stage, EAB feeds undetected under the bark of ash trees, disrupting water and nutrient flow, and ultimately killing the trees in just a few years. First discovered in 2002, the borer is responsible for the death or damage of approximately 15 million ash trees in southeast Michigan. The cooperative Emerald Ash Borer Response Project is an active, multi-agency group working collectively to detect, contain and respond to EAB and minimize its damage in the state.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/eab or www.emeraldashborer.info

Note to Editor: The regional Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week also is being recognized in Ohio and Indiana. For more information, contact Kay Hagen, Purdue University, 765-494-6682; Melissa Brewer, Ohio Department of Agriculture, 614-728-6404; Sharon Lucik, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 810-844-2713

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/> .

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

This newsletter is produced in single-space form in order to save paper and transmission costs.

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